consideration to encourage sericulture development in the areas mentioned above ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A World Bank/Swiss-assisted National Sericulture Project with an outlay of Rs. 555.30 crore has been launched in the current financial year for development of sericulture in the country. The project envisages development of sericulture in various states of the country including Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Kashmir, Bihar and Assam.

Transfer of Staff by the Regional Office of State Bank of Indore

256. DR.BAPU KALDATE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1062 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 4th May, 1989 and state :

(a) whether any Clerk/Head Clerks/Special Assistants/ Head Cashiers have been transferred by the Regional Offices of the State Bank of Indore during June, 1985 to 30th June, 1988 to other States ; and

(b) if so, what is the number thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI) : (a) and (b) Informa-lon is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Production of Fuel-Wood

257. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR ANSAL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the present ratio of fuel-wood production and consumption in the country ;

(b) whether Government propose to give any incentives for encouraging new plantation ; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI SUMATI ORAON) : (a) According to a report of the Forest Survey of India, the ratio of production of fuel-wood from the forest areas to demand in the country in the year 1987 was 1:6.4.

(b) and (c) Schemes being implemented under the programmes of National Westelands Development Board are aimed at encouraging raising of fuel-wood and fodder plantations. These includes schemes like Decentralised People's Nurseries, Rural Fuel-wood Plantations, Grants-in-aid to voluntary agencies, Margin Money Scheme, Externally-Aided Social Forestry Projects, etc.

Grant of Pension to Freedom Fighters of Punjab

258. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of applications of freedom fighters from Punjab still awaiting decision for grant of Freedom Fighters' Pension ;

(b) whether for expeditious disposal thereof , Government have considered the desirability of personal hearing being granted. to the claimants ; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) No application for grant of freedom fighter's pension from Punjab is pending with the Ministry for disposal at present. However, a non-official Committee has been set up to review those cases which were rejected earlier for the inability of applicants to produce required evidence on account of their suffering being in areas now forming part of Pakistan.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Pollution Control

259. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Will ths Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1978 have been sufficiently efficacious in dealing with the problem of pollution ; and

(b) if not, what fresh steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI SUMATI ORAON) : (a) and (b) The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (amended in 1978) and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 were not found to be sufficiently efficacious in dealing with problems of pollution. As such, these Acts have been recently strengthened by the passage of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 1988 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 1987 thereby giving more powers to the Pollution Control Boards to deal with the pollution problems. A comprehensive umbrella legislation *viz.* the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, has also been enacted which confers wide powers on the Central Government to protect the environment.

Chief Justices Committee on Problem of Arrears in Courts

260. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Committee of three Chief Justices constituted this year to examine the problems of arrears in courts has since met ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what are the main recommendations made by the Committee to cut down the backlog of cases in the judicial courts?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) to (c) The Committee has met several times. It has not finalised its Report.

Meeting of Chief Electoral Officers at Tirupati

261. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Election Commission has recently organised a meeting of Chief Electoral Officers at Tirupati; and

(b) if so, what were the main recommendations made thereat?